THREE
LETTERS
TO THE
REV. DR. PRICE:
CONTAINING
REMARKS
UPON HIS
FAST-SERMON.

[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]

THE

LETTERS

TO THE

REVEREND PRICE:

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129

THREE LETTERS TO THE REV. DR. PRICE: CONTAINING REMARKS UPON HIS FAST-SERMON.

Cobbler

By A COBLER.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THREE LETTERS TO DOCTOR PRICE.

LETTER I.

REV. SIR,

I AM but a Cobler, and the Son of a Cobler, and therefore a very unequal Antagoniſt to a great Philoſopher and Divine: But then, I am an *Engliſhman* and a Diſſenter; and you know both thoſe Characters ſo well by your own Experience, that you will not be ſurprized at the Liberty I take in freely cenſuring the Faſt Sermon you lately publiſhed. It was but Yeſterday this Sermon came into my Hand. I don't buy Books, but I borrow.—Your Sermon was lent to me by a Neighbour, who admires every thing you write; and who knows I do not like *any* thing you write; be-

cauſe I diſapprove your diſtinguiſhing Principles both in Politics and Divinity; and think you are but a poor, a very poor Writer, into the Bargain. I therefore, with my beſt Manners, declined accepting the Offer of reading the Sermon when the Gentleman firſt brought it to me; but he preſſed me, and wiſhed to know what I thought of it, as he ſaid he liked to hear me talk.— I read it laſt Night, after I had eat my Supper; put down a few Remarks as I went along, as is my general Cuſtom: And now, having finiſhed my Day's Work ſooner than uſual, I ſit down to write you a Letter upon the Subject, from the Minutes I had made; the Book was ſent Home this Morning.

THIS Sermon, you ſay in your Advertiſement, has been *miſrepreſented*; and this you give as Half the Reaſon for your publiſhing it —the other Half, *it was requeſted.* But *could* you not have added, Doctor, with a ſafe Conſcience, " I think it worthy of public Notice, " and it may do Good." Obſerve *I* do not think ſo; but undoubtedly you did. And I am ſure *that* is the beſt Reaſon an Author can give for publiſhing.— As for the ſtale Pretence of Requeſt and Miſrepreſentation, nobody believes it who is at all acquainted with Books

Books and Authors. Why did you not tell us how your Sermon had been misrepresented? There was Room enough for it in the Page of Advertisement, and the blank Page that follows.

But let us go to the Sermon itself.—And the first Thing I remark is your Observation on the Words of the Apostle *Jude*, "that "*Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and the Cities about "them, were set forth as an Example, suffer-"ing the Vengeance of eternal Fire;" that is, you say, "a Fire which *totally* consumed "them, and which appeared to be even still "burning, and would probably burn till the "End of the World." P. 2. Ah, Doctor! I see you do not like that *any thing* should burn longer than till the End of the World. *Eternal Fire* is quite shocking to a Man of your liberal Way of thinking. But are you sure, Doctor, that this Fire *quite consumed* these Cities? How came you then to credit the Report, as you apparently do, p. 5. that some Part of the Ruins of these Cities are still to be seen in the *Dead Sea?* If there are such Ruins, that still exist 5000 Years after they were totally consumed—have been burning ever since, still appear to burn, notwithstanding their being so long and so deeply submersed in Water

—it is very probable, as you ſay, they may continue burning till the End of the World. But who ever ſaw theſe Ruins? Who ever ſaw them burning, or ſaw thoſe Columns of Smoke, which, you ſay, are ſeen at certain Times to riſe from the Lake? p. 5. You refer us here to p. 84, 85. of *Maundrell*'s Travels. I have an Extract from thoſe very Pages, and which I am ſure is exact, in which Mr. *Maundrell* ſays, "Being deſirous to ſee the Remains (if there "were any) of thoſe Cities anciently ſituate in "this Place, I diligently ſurveyed the Waters, "as far as my Eye could reach, but neither "could I diſcern any Heaps of Ruins, nor *any* "*Smoke* aſcending above the Surface of the "Water." *Maund. Trav.* p. 85. 6th Ed. He ſays, indeed, that the Father-Guardian and Procurator of *Jeruſalem* aſſured him, that they had ſeen one of theſe Ruins. He was too modeſt and too polite a Man to give them the Lie, and too faithful to omit their Teſtimony; but it is plain he does not believe them: For, with all his Candour, he can ſay no more of them than that they "were *ſeemingly* not *deſti-* "*tute* either of Senſe or Probity." Dr. *Price* has certainly ſome Degree of both; but he has appealed to an Authority that contradicts his own Deſcription.

"That

"THAT Part of the Land of *Judea*," you ſay, "where theſe devoted Cities ſtood, was rich "and fertile above all the *other* Parts of *Judea*. "This induced great Numbers of People to "ſettle in this Part of *Judea*;" p. 2, 3. Tell me Doctor, for certainly you know, when this Country of the *Old Canaanites* firſt received the Name of *Judea?* and whether or not the Inhabitants, who thus thronged this fertile Country, were *Jews?* or elſe inform me what Figure of Speech you here employ? For when I meet with any Thing of this Kind that puzzles me, I can never reſt till I make it out.

I WANT Information, alſo, upon another Subject. For you ſay, p. 3. "The Cauſes "which produced the Richneſs of the Soil, "and crouded this Country with Inhabitants, "were ſuch as, at the ſame Time, produced "a Corruption of Manners." What! Do you mean, Doctor, that theſe Cauſes produced this Corruption of Manners as their natural Effect, in the ſame Manner as they produced the Fertility of the Soil? This is the moſt obvious Senſe of your Words. And, indeed, unleſs this be your Meaning, I will venture to ſay, Cobler as I am, that you talk ridiculouſly and abſurdly, and unworthy of a Philoſopher and a Divine. And if this *be* your Senſe, I congratulate

gratulate your Friend *Prieſtly* upon his Victory over your Prejudices, and this promiſing Indication of your intire Converſion. But what were theſe natural Cauſes that produced this amazing Effect, both in the Soil and in the Manners of Men? You reduce them all to one, *viz.* "a Warmth communicated by ſub-"terranean Fires." How know you that ſuch Fires exiſted there before the Day of the Deſtruction of *Sodom?* That the Materials were there before I have no Doubt; but that they were *actually* kindled before I ſhall not venture to ſay, till you are pleaſed to inform me upon what Evidence you aſſert it. Tell me alſo, at the ſame Time, how theſe ſubterranean Fires produced this kindly fertilizing Warmth in the Soil? For I have always hitherto been taught by other Philoſophers, that when the bituminous and ſulphureous Matter once takes fire, it produces a very different Effect. I do not aſk you how this ſame Warmth corrupts the Manners of Men? for I know you will ſay it was their own Fault; and, whether you can ſay it conſiſtently or not, I believe it to be true.

"The Scriptures," you obſerve, p. 4. "call "this great Event God's raining down from "Heaven Fire and Brimſtone." But *you* know better,

better, and tell us, "The Truth is, that it was "an Event of the ſame Kind with many that "have happened ſince; or an Irruption of liquid "Fire from the Bowels of the Earth, like the "Irruptions from Volcanoes, attended with "Thunders and Lightnings and Earthquakes." This may be true; but neither you nor any Man in the World can prove it. I ſuppoſe you will allow, at leaſt all genuine Philoſophers will allow, that GOD could rain down Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven; that is from the Clouds, if he pleaſed. So that your affected Contradiction to the Language of Scripture in this Inſtance, as in many other I have remarked in your Writings, is quite unneceſſary, if not, perhaps, rude in the Manner, and dangerous in its Tendency.

MUCH of the ſame Complexion is your Obſervation on the Colloquy between JEHOVAH and *Abraham*, p. 7. "I ſuppoſe," you ſay, "there is no Occaſion for telling you, that it "is not to be underſtood that there was, on "this Occaſion, exactly ſuch a Dialogue as this "between *Abraham* and the Governor of the "World." Why then, ſince you had ſo much important Matter to take up, and, as you tell your Audience you was in Danger of being tedious, why did you waſte your Time upon,

upon, and trouble your Congregation and the World with, ſuch an unneceſſary Obſervation? I hate quibbling, Doctor;—you thought it neceſſary not only to make the Obſervation, but to enlarge upon it too conſiderably. "It is a "Kind of parabolical Repreſentation," you ſay. That "it is founded on real Facts" you allow, "the Manner only of telling theſe Facts "*being to be* conſidered as diſguiſed and veiled "by a Mixture of Allegory." I am not qualified to make a Criticiſm upon your Stile, Doctor, but really you ſeem to be an aukward Writer *; and when a Man writes aukwardly, I take it for granted he thinks aukwardly too. However I will let your *being to be*, and every Thing elſe of that Sort, paſs; but let me aſk you, if God really did inform *Abraham* of his Deſign with reſpect to *Sodom*, and *Abraham* really interceded repeatedly and importunately, that God would ſpare the City for the Sake of the few righteous Perſons he hoped might be found in it, how do you know, or what Reaſon have you to imagine, that all this was not done exactly in the Manner here related? For there is nothing at all abſurd or ridiculous, nothing unworthy of God in this Rela-

* So I thought, when ſome Years ago I read your Eſſays. That on Miracles is, I ſtill think, the moſt crabbed and uncouth Thing I ever ſaw upon the Subject.

tion;

tion; but, taking the whole Story together, there is every Thing to perſuade a Man of plain Senſe, converſant with his Bible, to believe that the ſeveral Facts of *Abraham*'s entertaining the Angels;—the Angel *Jehovah*'s renewing the Promiſe to him concerning his Son by *Sarah*;—reproving *Sarah* for her Incredulity and Falſhood;—diſcovering to *Abraham* the ſpeedy Deſtruction of *Sodom*;—the two Angels going on towards *Sodom*, viſiting *Lot*, and bringing him out of the City in the Morning;—all took place in the Manner here related. For let it be obſerved, that if one Part of the Story is allegorized, the whole is an Allegory. Perhaps you think ſo. "Nor ſhould we," you tell us, "at all wonder at ſuch a Manner of re-"lating Facts, did we know how the Ancients "wrote Hiſtory, or by what Methods the Me-"mory of important Events was preſerved and "tranſmitted from one Generation to another, "before the Invention of Letters." The Modeſty of this Paſſage charms me exceedingly. For to be ſure *you* know, Doctor, the Manner in which the Ancients wrote Hiſtory, *&c.* or otherwiſe you could have made no Application of it to the preſent Caſe; yet, to avoid the Affectation of ſuperior Knowledge, and to keep clear of all Appearances of Incivility, in putting your Hearers and Readers in mind of their Ignorance,

norance, you politely ſay, " Nor ſhould *we* " wonder—did *we* know." I wiſh, Doctor, when you was in this good Mood, you had carried your Kindneſs a little farther, and that by a few Hints, delicately introduced, you had let us into this Secret: For at preſent, not knowing how the Ancients wrote Hiſtory, *&c.* we can make no Compariſon at all between *that* and the Method the ſacred Writers have adopted. I muſt therefore, for my own Part, ſtill wonder, not at *Moſes*, and his Manner of relating Facts, but at Dr. *Price*'s Account of this inſpired Writer's Method of treating his Subjects, and amuſing his Readers. For *Moſes*, it ſeems, indulged himſelf in this allegorizing Vein very much, ſo as to diſguiſe and veil thoſe Facts, which, of all others, are of the greateſt Importance to Mankind, and which they can learn no where elſe but from his Writings. For thus you proceed, p. 8. " The Remarks I have now " made, ſhould be attended to in reading many " of the other Accounts in this Book of *Geneſis*, " and particularly thoſe of the Creation, the " Fall, and the Deluge." You do believe, then, that both the World and Sin had a Beginning, and that there was, in ſome early Period, a very extenſive Deluge; but as for the Account *Moſes* gives of theſe Things, it is all mere Allegory and Fable. You have a Right,

Doctor

Doctor, to think as you pleaſe; but remember too, that when you attempt to obtrude ſuch Notions as theſe upon the World, every Man who loves his Bible, has a Right to *correct* and *rebuke* you for it: And accordingly I *do* rebuke you for it. Here I muſt take the Liberty to bid you Good-night; for I have almoſt written myſelf to ſleep. Another Evening, if I am not too much tired, I will take up my Pen again, and trouble you with ſome farther Remarks from

A COBLER.

April 15, 1779.

LETTER II.

REV. SIR,

I AM a Man of my Word. I promiſed you laſt Night that I would this Evening, if not too much tired, reſume my Remarks upon your Sermon; and therefore, though I have worked rather harder To-day than uſual, and was later at my Supper, I will try to fulfil my Promiſe.

IN Pages 8 and 9 you give us a very curious Piece of Philoſophy. For obſerving, accord-

ing to the divine Promiſe, that had there been ten righteous Perſons in *Sodom* it would have been ſaved, you add, "The natural Cauſes "which produced its Deſtruction would, in "this Caſe, either never have exiſted, or their "Operations would have been ſo directed, as "to ſuſpend or prevent the Calamity they pro-"duced." The firſt of theſe Alternatives comes too late, Doctor. For you had already told us, p. 4. that the natural Cauſe of this Deſtruction, was an Irruption of liquid Fire from the Bowels of the Earth; and theſe ſubterranean Fires you aſſure us, p. 3. exiſted previous to the Corruption of Manners among the Inhabitants, and were, indeed, the Cauſes of that Corruption. Theſe Cauſes then, I ſuppoſe, exiſted independently of the Character of the Inhabitants, and probably had exiſted from the Creation, or the Deluge at leaſt. Well, but had there been ten righteous Perſons in *Sodom*, "their Ope-"rations would have been directed, ſo as to ſuſ-"pend or prevent the Calamity they produced." Is this talking like a Philoſopher? I think not. That the Calamity would have been ſuſpended, and *prevented* too, if that means any thing more, as long as ten righteous Perſons could be found in *Sodom*, I firmly believe, upon the Credit of the divine Promiſe; but how the Cauſes themſelves which actually produced the

Calamity,

Calamity, ſhould have any Hand in ſuſpending or preventing it, I confeſs I do not underſtand. Under a different Direction, they would undoubtedly have produced different Effects—might counteract other Cauſes; but, under whatever Direction, no Cauſe can counteract itſelf in the ſame Inſtance: Yet this you ſeem to ſay.

In the ſame looſe and unguarded Manner, you talk of the favourable Interpoſition of Providence on Behalf of the Righteous. I will not, however, tranſcribe all the Remarks I made on this Head, leſt I ſhould appear captious. Only let me tell you, that when you ſay, p. 13. "The "worſt that any Calamity can do to a good "Man, is to take from him that which he does "not value," you ſoar above the higheſt Flight of methodiſtical Enthuſiaſm itſelf. Property and Friends, Life and Liberty, the good Man has no Value for, according to you. What a *bad Man* you muſt be then, who in all your political Writings put ſuch an extravagant Value upon theſe Things, as almoſt tempts one at Times to ſuſpect, that you know and hope for nothing better. But every Man is liable to doze, and forget himſelf at Times. You was doubtleſs nodding when you wrote theſe Words; for you preſently after comfort the Righteous,

with

with the Hope of ſome of the good Things of this World: Which would be abſurd, if neither they nor you ſet any Value upon them. Thus you encourage them, p. 17. "A *Zoar*, "or an Ark, may be provided for you, from "whence you may view the Storm, and find "yourſelves ſafe. *Methinks* the Friends of "Truth and Virtue may now look acroſs the "*Atlantic*, and entertain ſuch Hopes." But *methinks*, Doctor, it is rather ſafer being on this Side the *Atlantic*, and viewing at this Diſtance the Storm that is now raging on that rebellious Shore. And *methinks* the Encouragement youh old out to your virtuous Friends, is juſt the ſame, in Point of Wiſdom, as if the Angels had returned to *Lot*, when he was afraid to ſtay in *Zoar*, and bid him return to *Sodom*, and there view in Safety the Storm that he feared would fall upon *Zoar*. And once more, *methinks* you are an odd Sort of an *Engliſhman*, who can never mention your own Country, but you muſt inſolently pronounce its Doom, and conſign it over to utter Ruin. Pardon my uſe of this obſolete Word *methinks*; I adopt it upon your Authority.

I HAVE no Objection to your Character of a righteous Man, ſo far as it goes; only I think it would not have been amiſs, if you had put

a

a little Chriſtianity into it, as you are by Profeſſion a Chriſtian Divine. And I ſhould have liked it as well, if the Order had been inverted; and Religion, private Virtue, and Patriotiſm, had been the Deſcription of the righteous Man; rather than Patriotiſm, private Virtue, and Religion. I could write you a long Letter, ſolely upon the Difference between theſe two Deſcriptions; but that I wave at preſent: Only, before I meet with any Thing elſe to put me out of Temper, I will tell you how much pleaſed I was to obſerve, that, although you had your Reaſons for preferring this inverted Order of Things in the modelling your Sermon, yet theſe Things lie in your Mind in the ſame Order as they do in mine: For "public Virtue," you ſay, "cannot ſubſiſt without private; nor "can public and private Virtue ſubſiſt without "Religion;" p. 24. Here, Doctor, being quite in a kind and friendly Mood, I have a good mind to go to-bed: For, looking at the next Remark that lies before me, I find I ſhall be angry with you if I meddle with it. I have ſaid to myſelf two or three Times, Hang it, let it go—let it paſs. But I cannot let it paſs. The Words upon which it is founded are malignant—they ought to be cenſured, and I will cenſure them.—They are theſe:

"THIS alone is genuine Loyalty, and not "any Attachment to the Perſons of Princes, "ariſing from the Notion of their Sacredneſs. "There cannot be any Notion more ſtupid and "debaſing *. There is no Individual who, as "a Member of any Community, is more ſa-"cred than another, except as far as he is in-"veſted with the Authority of the Commu-"nity, and employed in executing its Will;" p. 18. GOD bleſs the King! Dr. *Price* thinks himſelf as good a Man as his Majeſty. I wiſh he was. I wiſh he had but half the Piety, the Virtue, and Patriotiſm of his Sovereign. He would then write, and preach too, in a very different Manner from what he has done of late. Every body knows, Doctor, as well as you, that the Sacredneſs of Princes is derived from their Office; from being inveſted with the Authority, the Majeſty of the State. As Men, their Perſons are not more ſacred than

* Yes, I will tell you of one, Doctor, that has both theſe Properties in a greater Degree, *viz.* Dr. *Prieſtly*'s Notion of Neceſſity and Materialiſm. I have read your Correſpondence upon that Subject. You cut a poor Figure there indeed; *Prieſtly* is too much for you in every Thing; he ſingled you out to grace his Triumph. Let me add, when I compare the Account you mutually give of each other's Doctrine, with the fulſome and over-ſtrained Compliments you give one another, I deteſt the Philoſophy that can allow and ſanctify ſuch Hypocriſy.

others;

others; but as Magiſtrates, as Sovereigns, they are. I am a poor ſimple Cobler, and no better than another Cobler; but make me a King, and my Perſon is ſacred; and my Subjects ought to have that Notion of me, and be attached to my Perſon on that Account. I ſuppoſe, Doctor, you know that Magiſtracy is an Ordinance of GOD; and that, although the Right of chuſing their Magiſtrates is in the People, yet the Office is of divine Appointment; and that divine Inſtitution gives a Sacredneſs to the Character. Yes, Doctor, the Perſons of Kings are ſacred, by all the Laws of GOD and Men; and that Man has no proper Regard to either, who is not attached to the Perſon of his Sovereign, as lawfully inveſted with the Majeſty of the State, and as the Miniſter of GOD. If, indeed, he has no Right to that Station and Character, depoſe him: Strip him of his uſurped Pre-eminence, and his Perſon is no longer ſacred; you may treat him as any other private Man. But you fly in the Face of the Community; you rebel againſt the Majeſty of the People; you renounce the Fear of GOD, if you do not honour the King. Perhaps ſome of theſe Expreſſions may ſeem too ſtrong; but (to adopt your own Words, p. 25, Note) I am not at liberty to ſuppreſs them—I approve them—they ſhall go;

and I will go to-bed.—Farewel till To-morrow Night, and then you ſhall hear farther from

The COBLER.

April 16, 1779.

LETTER III.

REV. SIR,

IF I had not been married, and thereby tied down to my Fate in this devoted Country, I do verily believe I ſhould be tempted to make a Voyage to *America*, merely to ſee with my own Eyes, whether the Inhabitants there are ſuch a People as you, and ſome other fine Writers and fine Speakers, repreſent them to be. You give ſuch a Character of them, as never was given before of any Nation under the Sun. "There is a Country," you ſay, "once united "to us, where every Inhabitant has in his Houſe "(as a Part of his Furniture) a Book on Law "and Government, to enable him to under-"ſtand his civil Rights; a Muſket, to enable "him to defend thoſe Rights; and a Bible, to "enable him to underſtand and practiſe his "Religion." P. 26.

HAVE

HAVE you been in *America* lately, Doctor? No: But you have Correſpondents there. O, ho! Aye, aye, I remember now; I have heard that you are one of thoſe Sort of *loyal Subjects* who correſpond with the *American* Rebels, the avowed Enemies of your Country *; and thereby you think, I ſuppoſe, "you do all you can" (as you ſay a righteous Man does, p. 18.) "to "promote the good Order of the State, by "complying with its Laws." Well; but who are theſe Correſpondents, who have ſent you this Character of the *Americans?* That you dare not ſay. But, do you think their Information is to be depended upon? Yes. What! Do you think the Man that ſent you that Letter knows every Inhabitant of *Britiſh America*, and the Furniture of every Houſe? O rare! But do you think he meant to include all the Provinces, even thoſe which are yet ſubject to *Britain*, or only thoſe which have revolted? Only thoſe which have revolted. Very well. And do you think the Man is fit to be believed, who writes and publiſhes ſuch Things as theſe? If *you* do, *I* do not. What! Not believe Dr. *Price?* No: Not when he reports from his *American* Correſpondents. I have converſed with *Americans*— I have catched them in telling Lies; and, were

* See the Treaty between *France* and *America*, in which *Great-Britain* is expreſsly called *the common Enemy*.

they every Man of them reputed Saints, I would not believe this Story: I would lay my Life on it, it is falſe. "Every Man a Bible, "to enable him to underſtand and practiſe his "Religion!" What Stuff! What Cant! Dr. *Price* himſelf does not believe that there are many of the *Americans* that *do* underſtand their Religion. No, Doctor: The *New England Calviniſts* themſelves are as far from your Scheme of Religion as the Papiſts of *Canada*, the Epiſcopalians of *Virginia*, the Quaker of *Pennſylvania*, the Methodiſts and *German* Quietiſts, who are ſpread through all the Provinces. You muſt look at Home, even in this devoted Country, for Men that not only have Bibles, but *underſtand* the Bible as you do, Doctor: Men who have liberal and rational Views of Chriſtianity.

THEY have alſo, every Man of them, a Book on Law and Government. That is, ſaid a Wagg who was preſent when I read this, Dr. *Price*'s Pamphlet on Civil Liberty: A Book, continued he, which my Father ſays is intirely ſubverſive of all Order and Subordination in Society; and, wherever its Principles are acted upon, it muſt produce Confuſion, and every evil Work. I think ſo too; and that Dr. *Price* has more to anſwer for, both to GOD and his Country,

Country, as the Author of that Book, than *Bute*, *North*, and *Sandwich*, all taken together; though I believe neither of thoſe Lords are ſo good as they ſhould be. *America* will one Day execrate that Book; and were the incomparable *Locke* and *Sydney* now alive, they would both ſay—Hang the Author. Not that I would have you hanged, Doctor; not for the World: I would ſooner hang myſelf. The *Americans* have all got Muſkets too. I wiſh they had, and every Man a thouſand Rounds of Powder and Ball. Poor Fellows! There are tens of Thouſands, and ten times ten Thouſand, who, if they had but Arms in their Hands, would ſoon avenge themſelves of their Tyrants—make them fly to their kindred Slaves in *Gaul*, and ſoon reſtore Peace, Liberty, and conſtitutional Order to their Country.

You certainly, Doctor, indulged yourſelf in a ſarcaſtic Vein, though in the Pulpit, when you aſk exultingly, "What can hurt ſuch a "Country?—How ſecure muſt it be, while it "preſerves its Virtue againſt all Attacks?" p. 26. I do not know, indeed, how it can be hurt much more than it is. Such a Scene of Wretchedneſs extends itſelf through the greater Part of the rebellious Colonies, as beggars all Deſcription; if I can depend upon the Word

of

of a diſpaſſionate Eye-witneſs, who lately fled from the Oppreſſion of thoſe lawleſs Tyrants, who have nearly ruined that once happy People. If any Evils yet remain to fill up the Meaſure of their Calamity, it is but their following your Advice, and perſevering a little longer in their rebellious Virtue, and they will thereby pull them all down upon their Heads.

But while *America* is thus ſecure and happy in your legendary Sermon, *Great-Britain*, the Land of Liberty, Peace, and Plenty, is irrecoverably ruined, and loſt beyond Redemption. For thus you deliver your oracular Wiſdom—"When I conſider the Accounts I am often "hearing of the Court, the Camp, and the Se-"nate—I am ready to believe there is no "room for Hope;" p. 27. Poor Man! What have you heard of the Court, the Camp, and the Senate? Who brings you Intelligence from thence? If you had any juſt Means of accurate and enlarged Information from thoſe Quarters, and was capable of forming a juſt Eſtimate upon it, you would not ſee your Country in ſuch a hopeleſs Condition. But I will not tranſcribe the Remark I at firſt made upon this vile Inſinuation: For I had actually run my Awl into the very Heart of Dr. *Price*, and then, fooliſhly enough, attempted to fill up the Wound

Wound with a mere Cobler's Panegyric upon the Court, the Camp, and the Senate too. But this I will ſay, I glory in my Sovereign, and I believe every honeſt *Engliſhman* does ſo too. Religion, Virtue, and Patriotiſm, ſit united upon the Throne; and the Man that ſays otherwiſe is a Traitor * and a Liar †. I will ſtop—I ſhall otherwiſe go beyond my Laſt. Let the Senator, however, the Soldier, and the Sailor each know, that I am their Friend; and their Virtues, their Praiſes ſhall live, when Dr. *Price* and his Sermon are both forgotten: For you muſt be forgotten, Doctor, and ſo muſt I. But the noble Stand which the Nation is now making, againſt that unbounded political Licentiouſneſs which threatens the very Being of the *Britiſh* Conſtitution, ſhall remain upon Record, for the Admiration and Inſtruction of future Ages.

You aſcend from the Court, the Camp, and the Senate, to the Abuſe of the national Character at large. The Degeneracy of the preſent Age has ever been the Subject of vulgar Complaint. But you are above the Influence of vulgar Prejudices, and therefore may be ſuppoſed, without Breach of Charity, to adopt

* I learnt this Word from Dr. *Price*. † This I learned of the Apoſtle *John*.

that

that diſmal Mode of Lamentation merely from political Partiality. Upon this Principle, which makes a Man ſay or do any thing that will ſerve his Purpoſe, you roundly aſſert, p. 27. "That "they [the Righteous] are a ſmaller Number "than they were." Here, Doctor, if it is not too great a Favour, I muſt beg to be let a little into your Secret. I have read ſome of your Calculations upon the Probabilities of Life, &c. and can tolerably well underſtand the Principles upon which you proceed. But here, I cannot imagine how you go to work in comparing the Number of the Righteous in the preſent Age, with thoſe of the laſt or any preceding Generation, ſo as to decide with Certainty, they are fewer than they were. Unhappy Man! Do you know what you have ſaid? What none but the GOD of Heaven has a Right to ſay; and which, perhaps, the Records of his Omniſcience may, another Day, prove to be falſe.

TO this you add a ſecond Ground of your Deſpondency, delivered in a Tone equally poſitive and unbecoming, and expreſſed in Terms that form a direct and abſolute Contradiction. "A conſiderable Part of the Righteous them-"ſelves," you ſay, "or of that Deſcription of "Men to whom we muſt look for the Salva-"tion of the Kingdom, are only nominally "righteous.

" righteous. They are a ſmaller Number than " they were; and of this Number many are " falſe and hollow." Some People reckon you a ſenſible Writer, Doctor: Take care you do not forfeit that Reputation. Had ſuch a poor Cobler as *I* written ſuch a contradictory Piece of Nonſenſe, the Sovereigns of Literature would have enjoined me Silence for a Twelvemonth. *The Righteous themſelves falſe and hollow*, and only *nominally righteous!* How know you that, Doctor? They have proved it, perhaps you will ſay, by their Conduct. Then they are Apoſtates; they no longer belong to the few, from whom you look for the Salvation of the Nation. And yet, take out all the Apoſtates, and leave only a few really righteous Men (for from theſe only can you look for Salvation) ſtill a conſiderable Part of theſe few really righteous Men are only *nominally righteous*, are *falſe and hollow*. What wonderful Diſcoveries a great Genius is capable of making! If it is indeed true, Doctor, that the Number of that Sort of righteous Men which, I ſuppoſe, you have in View, *viz.* the violent Oppoſers of all the Meaſures of Government, is conſiderably reduced, I rejoice in it, as a happy Preſage of future Good, and not, as you make it, an Omen of approaching Ruin. I do not think that genuine Patriotiſm either loſes or gains by the Verſatility

of ſuch Men as theſe. Their Country, however, may gain ſomething by them, which ever Side they take—they make Miniſters cautious by their Oppoſition—and, which may have its uſe, give a ſpecious Appearance of Popularity to their Meaſures when they are converted. Not that I believe ſuch Men as theſe, ever mean to ſerve their Country *for nothing*. No Thanks, therefore, are due to them; but to Him, who brings Good out of Evil. But I believe it is not ſo difficult a Thing as you repreſent it, p. 30. to find "diſintereſted Patriots, who are "ready, in this Time of Diſtreſs, to ſerve their "Country for nothing." It may be difficult to find them within the Circle of your Party Connections; you ought not to look for them there: And therefore I do not wonder at your being ſo much ſurprized to have diſcovered one; and that you expreſs yourſelf rather cautiouſly upon the Queſtion whether there are any more. See Note, p. 30. I queſtion with you, whether their Services will be ever be called for: I hope not. The Nation does not want them in thoſe Stations they are aiming at; and would ſtand a fair Chance of being plundered and ruined by them, were they to be admitted with their preſent Principles and apparent Views: For no Men are to be ſo much ſuſpected as thoſe, who, from mere Reſentment and Deſpair, thus

boaſt

boaſt of their Diſintereſtedneſs. Stay, Doctor, till you know the Hearts of theſe Men; or till they have an Opportunity of proving, in ſome unambiguous Manner, their Diſintereſtedneſs, before you promiſe for them thus poſitively, that "GOD will reward them." GOD will reward every Man according to his Works: That is all you know; that is all you have any Right to ſay. But really, both your Praiſes and your Cenſures are ſo extravagant and ſo incautiouſly beſtowed, that I believe few People, who are not Partizans, will pay much Regard to either. You do indeed condeſcend to acknowledge, that ſome good Men may be found among all our Parties. And here in your Note, p. 30, 31. you (ridiculouſly enough) make a Merit of this wonderful Conceſſion. "In this," you ſay, "I differ *extremely* from the learned "and worthy and very liberal Biſhop of *Exeter*, "who calls the great Men, who for ſome Time "have been oppoſing Meaſures which have "brought this Kingdom near its laſt Struggle, "*a deſperate and daring Faction.* It is probable, "therefore, that he thinks no good Men can "be found among them." I have not the Biſhop's Sermon by me; for, as I have already told you, I do not buy, only borrow, Books; but I very much ſuſpect that his Lordſhip's Words are not fairly applied in this Quotation.

However, be that as it will, I will take the Liberty here to put you in mind of your own Note, p. 25. where you acknowledge ſome of your Expreſſions are too ſtrong; "but every "candid Perſon," you ſay, "muſt ſee that "your Views are general, and ſhould any one "imagine the contrary, he will greatly injure "you." Now had you been ſo *extremely* candid as you would make us believe, even extremely *more* ſo than the *liberal* Biſhop of *Exeter* himſelf, might it not have occurred to your Thoughts, that the ſame Apology might be made for the Biſhop's ſtrong Expreſſions as for your own? And ſo much the rather, as the whole of the Biſhop's Sermon, if I remember right, is in the candid Strain; whereas, in all your political Writings, your Language is violent throughout. Indeed Doctor, boaſt as long as you pleaſe, I do not believe you have a Grain of Candour about you, except for your own Party; but that you make no Conſcience of abuſing and injuring the moſt reſpectable Characters in the World, if they differ from you in Politics? And what independant Man in his Senſes does not?

You muſt have another Blow at the Archbiſhop of *York* too, who it ſeems, has called the ſame great Perſonages (if his Words are not wickedly miſapplied)

miſapplied) "A Body of Men who are held "together by the ſame Bond that keeps to-"gether the loweſt and wickedeſt Combina-"tions, that is Rogues and Thieves. As "this Cenſure was expreſſed in the Pulpit, I "have," you ſay, "in this Diſcourſe been a "little free in delivering Cenſures; but had I "delivered any ſuch Cenſures as theſe, I ſhould "have thought myſelf inexcuſable." What Occaſion for all this puffing, Doctor? It ſinks you, and muſt ſink you in the Opinion of all thinking People: For every body will not believe you to be a candid Man, againſt the Sight of their own Eyes, merely becauſe you are pleaſed to give yourſelf out for ſuch a one. A *Chatham* might ſay and unſay, and make us ſwallow his Contradictions unperceived, in the delicious Draught of his ſtrong and intoxicating Eloquence: But Dr. *Price* muſt not expect to do the ſame. No, Sir; every body that can read *Engliſh* (as Admiral *Keppel* ſays) may ſee in your other political Pieces, and in this Sermon itſelf, much more criminal Cenſures than this of the Archbiſhop's, allowing the Application you have given it, and allowing all the Criminality that can be found in that Application, even by a Jury of modern Patriots themſelves. For what is it his Arch-Lordſhip ſays concerning this Combination againſt the

Meaſures

Meaſures of Government? Not that it is the loweſt and wickedeſt Combination;—not that the Members of it are Rogues and Thieves;—but that *they are held together by the ſame Bond*; that is, *private Intereſts* and *mutual Safety*. Have you ſaid nothing worſe than this? Look to your 24th and 27th Pages, and there you will find abundant Evidence to prove you, in your Words, altogether inexcuſable indeed: For, according to your Account, ſcarcely any but Rogues and Thieves are to be found in any of the Departments of Government. For if Corruption is openly avowed among them, as you ſay it is beyond all Example, what are they but Rogues and Thieves. "When Men "are wanted," ſay you, "for any Department "of the State, do you *ever* find that only ho-"neſt Men are ſought for? What Vacancies "would be made in public Offices, were all "but Men of pure Manners and independant "Integrity taken from them?" Very true, Doctor, I believe it would make many Vacancies. But I ſay this not from any perſonal Knowledge of the Character of thoſe who now fill thoſe Departments, but from the general Hiſtory and Character of Mankind. But let me aſk you, Sir, how you came to aſk ſuch a ſimple Queſtion as the firſt of theſe certainly is? How ſhould you or your Congregation know

know whether honeſt Men are ſought for or not, when there is a Vacancy? Your Queſtion is indeed a fly and diſingenuous Affirmation, that they are not ſought for or deſired: But I am ſure it is impoſſible for you to prove it. However, upon your own Principles, if thoſe who are in Place and Power do not ſo much as ſeek for, or deſire honeſt Men to fill up their Vacancies; and if there are in fact very few Men of pure Manners and independant Integrity among them, as your ſecond Queſtion implies, pray what are they but a Sett of Rogues and Thieves? Bluſh, Doctor;—if there is any Blood in your Veins, let us ſee it in your Face.

In the diſmal Picture you draw of the national Character, you mention Maſquerades as a new Improvement in our Pleaſures, and add, p. 32. "I queſtion whether in *Sodom* itſelf any "thing much worſe could have been found." Lord bleſs you, Doctor, a thouſand Times worſe Things than Maſquerades every where; even in *America*, even in *Hackney*; nay, even in the Heart of Dr. *Price*, or elſe he is a Non-ſuch. I am ſure there are worſe Things in my poor Heart; and I don't believe, Doctor, you are a Bit better, though I allow you to be a greater and a more learned Man than myſelf.

This,

This, I confeſs, looks rather vain; and, as you are a Chriſtian Miniſter, you would perhaps tell me, if I was in your Way, that this is contrary to the Apoſtolic Canon, which requires us to eſteem every Man better than ourſelves. But do you think every Rogue in the Miniſtry a better Man than yourſelf? Why then ſhould I be obliged to tell a Lie any more than you? Don't be angry, Doctor, I have almoſt done. It is now paſt Twelve o'Clock, and yet I intend to finiſh before I go to-bed. There are, however, two more Reaſons of your Deſpondency yet to be conſidered, but I ſhall beſtow very few Words upon them.

"A THIRD of the Empire," you ſay, "is "loſt;" p. 23. How do you reckon when you make this Eſtimate? This ſingle Queſtion is a ſufficient Anſwer to your unfounded and bold Aſſertion. "Our Debts and Taxes already "inſupportable, increaſing faſt, and likely ſoon "to cruſh us." *Ibid.* You have told us of this ſo long and ſo often, and Experience gives us ſuch abundant Proof of its Falſhood, that no body minds you now upon this Head. Taxes inſupportable! when ſuch a Cobler as I am can ſupport my Family with Comfort, and can challenge *you*, Dr. *Price*, to point out any Country where the Taxes are leſs, or where all

Ranks

Ranks of People do or may live in ſo much Eaſe, Peace, and Plenty. That is no good Cauſe, Doctor, that wants ſuch Tricks as theſe to ſupport it. Yet the ſame Miniſters are continued, and the ſame Meaſures are purſued. I think you make this Complaint, though I had not marked it in my Minutes, and the Book is gone. I am ſure the Senſe is your's, if not the Words. This is the Burden of the Song throughout your whole Party. In Fact, you have nothing elſe to ſay that is worth hearing. Diſmiſs the preſent wicked Miniſtry, and let me and my Friends take the Reins of Government, and this poor ruined proſtrate Country ſhall riſe to the higheſt Pinnacle of Glory in an Inſtant. Now really, Doctor, I don't ſo much wonder at this; for I have ſeveral Times thought myſelf that *I*, even *I*, could have managed better in ſome Things, than our preſent Miniſters have done. And I ſuppoſe there is ſcarcely to be found a Cobler in the Kingdom that has not, at Times, had ſuch Thoughts as well as I. Not that I diſapprove the general Plan of their Meaſures; which I believe, and am ſure, is that of the Conſtitution; but they have not purſued thoſe Meaſures with proper Spirit and Reſolution. But if *I* approve their Meaſures, you think *GOD* diſapproves them. Aye! if you can prove that, I'll never ſpeak a Word in their Favour any more. You ſay it

 indeed;

indeed; and aſſign, as the laſt Reaſon of your Deſpondency, "The uniform Effect of all our "public Meaſures for the laſt four or five "Years. This," you ſay, "is ſo remarkable, "as to diſpoſe us to conclude that we are in-"deed forſaken by Heaven;" p. 34. This, I will venture to ſay, is ſuch a Piece of ſuperſtitious Folly and impious Rant, as is not often to be met with. The Miſrepreſentation that it gives of known Facts, impeaches your Integrity, and the Inference you draw from that Miſrepreſentation, reflects Diſhonour upon your Character as a Man, a Chriſtian, and a Miniſter. Our too ſanguine Expectations have been, indeed, greatly diſappointed. We have met alſo with ſome conſiderable Checks in the Proſecution of the War, eſpecially in the Expedition from *Canada*. But what are theſe, compared with the Loſſes, Diſappointments, and Defeats in the Beginning of the laſt War, in *America*, in *India*, in *Hanover*, in *Minorca*? Were we then forſaken of Heaven? No; "the Loſs of *Minorca*," you ſay, "produced a Change of Meaſures." Can you never repreſent Things fairly, Doctor, when you are writing upon Politics? What Change of Meaſures was produced by the Loſs of *Minorca*? I remember the Time, but I never heard or read of what you talk of, nor, I believe, any body elſe: It rouſed the Spirit of our naval and military Commanders. Some

of

of our other Loſſes produced a Change of Miniſters, but not of Meaſures; for every body knows, the new Miniſter adopted the Meaſures of his Predeceſſor, which he had uniformly oppoſed and depreciated in the Senate. Our preſent Race of Patriots, even with you amongſt them, Doctor, are but poor, very poor Mimicks of that great Man. He was not himſelf equal to the ſecond Attempt; otherwiſe I doubt not he would have played the ſame Trick again, and ſaved his Country a ſecond Time, by the vigorous Proſecution of the very Meaſures you condemn. Had it been the Will of GOD, I ſhould have rejoiced to have ſeen him take the Lead in Adminiſtration. But *Chathams* ſhall ſtill ariſe, if they are wanted to our Safety—*France* ſhall be humbled—*America* ſhall be reſtored—and *Britain* continue to be, as ſhe is at this Day, in Spite of malignant Miſrepreſentation, the Glory of the whole Earth. So prays, ſo propheſies,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

April 19 *, 1779. *The* COBLER.

* I have not broke my Promiſe. I began this Letter in the Evening of the 17th, but was not able to finiſh it. I am a Man of my Word; Dr. *Price* is not: For he took his Leave of Politics in his ſecond Piece on Civil Liberty, and has now returned to them again in the Pulpit.

FINIS.

20 JY 63